

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ALGIER 03795 311311Z

44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 SY-05

SCCT-01 IO-10 /081 W

----- 073231

O 311235Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3580

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 3795

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OPEC, ACEC, AG, IR, SA, AU

SUBJ: RELEASE OF OPEC TERRORISTS

REF: A. STATE 304486 B) ALGIERS 3775

1. ON DEC. 30, PRESIDENCY DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL
HAMDANI CONFIRMED TO ME THAT OPEC TERRORISTS HAD BEEN
RELEASED. HAMDANI INDICATED THAT RELEASE HAD TAKEN PLACE
SOME TIME (THAT IS A DAY OR SO) AGO. HE DID NOT SAY WHERE
TERRORISTS ARE AT PRESENT TIME AS HE HAS DONE IN PAST,
HAMDANI DEFENDED GOA ACTION ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS.
YAMANI AND AMOUZEGAR WERE IN GRAVE PERIL AND RELEASE OF
TERRORISTS WAS INTEGRAL PART OF DEAL WHICH SAVED THEIR
LIVES.

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR
ABERKANE PROVIDED FOLLOWING BACKGROUND ON SITUATION TO
VISITING AMERICAN PROFESSOR WILLIAM QUANDT. ABERKANE HAD
SPOKEN WITH CARLOS AND DESCRIBED HIM AS RUTHLESS,
SINGLE-MINDED MAN OF OBVIOUS LATIN ORIGIN. (ABERKANE
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PAGE 02 ALGIER 03795 311311Z

SPOKE WITH HIM IN ENGLISH.) IT WAS CARLOS WHO SHOT

LIBYAN, IZMARLI, AND APOLOGIZED TO HOSTAGES AT LENGTH DURING FLIGHT FROM VIENNA TO ALGIERS. IZMARLI, CARLOS CLAIMED, HAD FORCED HIM TO ACT AS HE DID. CARLOS HAD EXPECTED THAT LIBYANS WOULD RECEIVE TERRORISTS WARMLY WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN TRIPOLI FROM ALGIERS, BUT NONETHELESS THOUGHT IT PRUDENT TO REMAIN ON PLANE AND HAVE ANOTHER MEMBER OF GANG DO NEGOTIATING WITH LIBYANS. HE MOST DISAPPOINTED WHEN LIBYANS PROVED UNCOOPERATIVE AND RETURNED TO ALGERIA AS ONLY COUNTRY WHICH SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND POSITION OF GROUP.

3. ABERKANE SAID HE HAD ALSO SPOKEN WITH YAMANI AND SECONDED HAMDANI'S COMMENT THAT SAUDI HAD BEEN IN GRAVE DANGER. YAMANI, ABERKANE SAID, WAS SHAKEN MAN. DURING HIS CAPTIVITY, YAMANI HAD TALKED WITH CARLOS AND HAD SAID TERRORISTS MISTAKEN IN TRYING TO IMPOSE "REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE." REVOLUTION SHOULD, IN YAMANI'S VIEW, WELL UP FROM MASSES. TO THIS CARLOS REPLIED, IN EFFECT, WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF MASSES? YOU SHOULD TALK TO ALGERIANS. THEY, NOT YOU, HAVE MADE A REVOLUTION AND KNOW WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT.

4. ABERKANE SPOKE BITTERLY ABOUT EDITORIAL IN WASHINGTON POST TREATING ALGIERS WITH CONTEMPT. HE SAID ALGERIAN REACTION TO IT WAS SUMMED UP BY REMARK OF MINISTER (FROM SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS APPEARS IT WAS ABDESSELAM) THAT AMERICANS WOULD HAVE TALKED OUT OF OTHER SIDE OF THEIR MOUTHS HAD SECRETARY KISSINGER BEEN AMONG THE HOSTAGES.

5. I HAVE JUST RECEIVED STATE'S 304486 INDICATING WE CONSIDERING PUBLICLY TAKING ALGERIANS TO TASK FOR RELEASING TERRORISTS. ALTHOUGH TELEGRAM DOES NOT ASK OUR OPINION, WISH TO REITERATE BELIEF THAT USG SHOULD AVOID COMMENT. FAULT IN FIRST INSTANCE LIES WITH VIENNESE AND OPEC. ALGERIANS WERE FACED WITH NECESSITY SAVE HUMAN LIVES WHICH ENDANGERED THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIRS. WHILE THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE MIGHT BE ABLE CONTEMPLATE DISAPPEARANCE OF OPEC MINISTERS WITH PHILOSOPHICAL DETACHMENT, ALGERIANS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO DO SO, PARTICULARLY WHEN THEY BELIEVED A MAN AS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ALGIER 03795 311311Z

IMPORTANT TO THEM AND TO ENTIRE ARAB WORLD AS YAMANI TO BE IN IMMINENT JEOPARDY. UNDERSTAND SAUDIS MADE IT VERY PLAIN TO ALGERIANS THAT THEY WANTED YAMANI TO SURVIVE AT ALL COSTS.

6. PUBLIC CRITICAL COMMENT FROM USG IS GOING TO BE ONE MORE BRICK IN WALL OF DISTRUST NOW BUILDING UP BETWEEN U.S. AND ALGERIANS OVER SAHARA AFFAIR. IF WE NEED TO MAKE POINT, SUGGEST WE DO SO THROUGH NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS RATHER THAN PRESS.

IT WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN TERMS INFLUENCING ALGERIAN
PERFORMANCE.
PARKER

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NNN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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